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MOUNT BAKER

✓
NATIONAL FOREST



FOREST SERVICE •

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Pacific Northwest Region

September 1953

Mount Baker National Forest

THE MOUNTAIN that lends its name to the surrounding public forest land has had several names. Snow-clad Mount Baker, so conspicuous from Puget Sound and Northwest coastal lowlands, originally was known by its unwritten Indian name, Komo Kulshan, meaning "uncounted snows." Spanish adventurers were the first to put the mountain on the white man's map, naming it La Montana del Carmelo, or "great white watcher." In 1792 the English explorer Captain Vancouver rediscovered the mountain from Puget Sound and named it in honor of Lt. Joseph Baker who is credited as the first to view the mountain from Vancouver's ship.

It was 1852 when the first white men, Roeder and Peabody, with the cooperation of friendly Indians landed on Northwest shores (Bellingham Bay) to establish permanent homes. They also built a water-powered sawmill, which was the beginning of the first industry. Virgin timber was dense and continuous from the water's edge, across the coastal lowlands, across dark green foothills, and up distant slopes to the edge of alpine snows. The extensive old-growth forests of Douglas-fir and western redcedar of northwest Washington were the most magnificent timber stands ever known.

Utilization of the virgin forest formed a sturdy foundation for the framework of northwest Washington settlements. Farming then followed logging on the fertile lowland soil, and the farmers had stumps to remove—stumps 5 to 10 feet in diameter so closely spaced that it was impossible to drive a wagon through a pasture. Meanwhile, there was a gold rush or two, lending colorful interludes to the pioneer story of territorial development.

Today, after 100 years of growth west of the Cascades in northwest Washington, lumbering is rated second only to agriculture in the economy of the area. About 10 percent of the three northwest Washington counties is classified as agricultural land. The nonagricultural foothill area is highly productive forest land, mostly privately owned. The more rugged back-country forest land has remained in public ownership, providing watershed, timber, recreation, wildlife, and livestock forage values. About a third of Mount Baker National Forest acreage is commercial timberland. Although the remainder is classified as noncommercial, its other public values contribute much to the welfare of Pacific Northwest communities.

The Mount Baker Forest extends 60 miles from the Canadian boundary southward along the west side of the Cascade Range to a point almost due east of Everett, Wash. Comprised of 1,818,237 acres of public land in the rugged back country of Whatcom, Skagit, and the north half of Snohomish Counties, it is bounded along the Cascade Crest by the Chelan and Wenatchee National Forests and on the south by the Snoqualmie National Forest. The deep, irregular indentations in the westerly boundary coincide with those of the river valleys.

This public land is managed under a multiple-use program directed

toward providing the greatest good for the greatest number of people in the long run. Multiple-use means that all of the basic resources of the forest—water, timber, recreation, wildlife, and forage—are considered carefully in management of an area. The management of any one resource is not emphasized to the detriment of others, and a combination of several uses is generally possible on the same area.

Water—Liquid Gold

Water is truly liquid gold. Not only population growth but industrial development and the widespread use of modern-home conveniences have brought about a tremendous increase in the nationwide demand for this precious commodity. Recent reports of shortages in various sections of the United States have emphasized the importance of adequate water supplies for domestic and industrial use and for waterpower.

The great upper Skagit watershed furnishes the water harnessed by the city of Seattle's dams and powerhouses at Newhalem, Diablo, and Ross. Other power developments are located on Nooksack and Baker Rivers.

Forest cover and soil on the mountains of the Mount Baker Forest form a great natural reservoir that stores water and feeds the streams which are tapped by a dependent population below. If the vegetative cover is maintained over the soil, rain and melting snow percolate slowly into the ground for future use instead of running swiftly off the surface, eroding the land and contributing to flood damage. For this reason, it is important that our watersheds be protected from fire, destructive timber cropping, and overgrazing by wildlife and domestic stock.

Timber

Timber production, a major purpose of national forest management, involves harvesting a mature crop, protecting and improving second growth, and reestablishing a new crop on denuded and cutover forest land. Each year, almost a thousand acres of cutover land is planted with Douglas-fir on the Mount Baker National Forest. On the commercial-forest area of Mount Baker, it is possible to produce continuously each year, 140 million board-feet of timber. The word continuous has great significance. Timber is a crop that can be grown under long-range planning, giving continuous employment in woods and mills to the workers of northwest Washington. Thus it contributes to the economy of the region and the Nation.

National forest timber to be harvested is sold "on the stump." Private industry handles the harvesting all the way from the stump through the mills to the retail market. When Government timber is for sale it is advertised and sold to the highest bidder; then the buyer carries out the logging contract under Forest Service cutting plans. Logging in the rugged parts of northwest Washington is not an easy undertaking. Truck road construction is difficult at best and high-lead logging with spar trees and cables is necessary. Logs are hauled from far back

on mountain slopes to inland mills or to Puget Sound. In Puget Sound the logs are measured, sorted, sold or traded, and rafted to mills. Logs dumped in Puget Sound have ready access to any of the waterfront mills of Bellingham, Anacortes, Everett, and Seattle.

Timber management is a major part of a forest ranger's work. It requires knowing how much timber there is and how fast it is growing so that suitable sustained-yield management plans can be made for the area. Sustained yield means that the forest is managed for maximum and continuous production of timber of desirable kinds. In planning where to cut timber, the forest officer must consider such factors as maintenance of streamside timber for watershed protection and the preservation of recreational values.

A few forest areas are established as "natural areas" and left unchanged for observation and study for all time. There is such an area near Mount Shuksan and another on Pilchuck Mountain near Verlot. Other areas, classified as "wilderness," are left undeveloped except for protection and recreation trails so that there will always be a place for people to get away from the tensions of modern living.

The timber management job on Mount Baker National Forest involves handling approximately 400 timber sales each year. Of the money collected from timber sales, grazing, and other uses, 25 percent is returned to Washington State for distribution to the counties in which the forest is located for benefit of schools and roads.

Recreation

Outdoor recreation within national forests is a resource that helps sustain the third largest industry in northwest Washington—the tourist trade. Annually, several hundred thousand persons use the Mount Baker National Forest for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, riding, skiing, camping, picnicking, and berry picking.

Forest recreation affords rest and play and a complete change from the work-a-day routine. More than 30 forest camps provide simple camping and sanitation facilities and safe water supplies for Mount Baker forest visitors. However, more camps and improved facilities are needed to prevent overcrowding and to maintain sanitation and safety standards. A directory of improved campgrounds, listing facilities at each, can be obtained from the Forest Supervisor in Bellingham, Wash., or by writing the Regional Forester, Post Office Box 4137, Portland 8, Oreg.

Wildlife

The Nooksack, Skagit, Cascade, Sauk, and North Fork of the Stillaguamish Rivers provide fishing for sea-run steelhead. Many of the numerous high lakes in the Mount Baker Forest have been stocked and afford good trout fishing. Although usually remote and not easy to reach, these mountain lakes in their beautiful settings are subjects to challenge the skill of the photographer as well as the fisherman.

The sight of wild animals along road or trail lends interest to any forest outing. The most abundant big game animal is the black-tailed deer. This species is plentiful enough so that a reasonable hunter-take is necessary to keep its numbers limited to the available food supply. The black bear is fairly common and always fascinating. Sometimes his activities approach the nuisance point, however, if he has learned to get food from cabins and garbage cans. The cougar or mountain lion is rarely seen. Tracks, signs, and occasionally the remains of a cougar-kill are usually the only evidence of one's presence. Cougar hunting is rugged sport.

The mountain goat is one of the rarest and most picturesque wild animals in the mountains of northwest Washington. Unrestricted hunting in the past probably accounts for its rarity. However, under restricted hunting there continues to be a moderate increase in their number so that once again it is occasionally possible to see Mr. and Mrs. Goat. Mountain goats usually stay in the high country on the west side of the Cascades; a glimpse of one, even through binoculars, is a thrill to all mountain travelers. These interesting animals can be observed from the road in a few areas.

A herd of elk was planted a few years ago in the South Fork of Nooksack River outside the national forest. This herd is increasing and will likely spread to national forest range within a few years. Beaver, fox, coyote, rabbit, grouse, ptarmigan, marten, and bobcat are some of the smaller species of wildlife that are a part of the forest community.

State regulations concerning hunting and fishing apply on national forest lands, and sportsmen visiting the Mount Baker National Forest should be careful to conform to them. Protection and management of the wildlife habitat or environment is one of the jobs of the forest ranger. He makes every effort to keep the forest productive of wildlife populations.

Access to the Forest

Several roads penetrate the Mount Baker National Forest. An excellent highway from Bellingham gives access to Heather Meadows on the north slopes of Mount Baker. The part of this highway from Glacier to the vicinity of Mount Baker Lodge was constructed with Federal forest highway funds and turned over to the State highway system for maintenance.

From Concrete, Darrington, and Granite Falls, forest roads follow along the Skagit, Suiattle, Sauk, and Stillaguamish Rivers. The road into Baker Lake is a forest highway on the Whatcom County road system. A county road from Marblemount up the Cascade River extends to within 2 miles of Cascade Pass. In addition, a cross-State highway is proposed via Diablo and Ross Dams within the forest.

There are many other Forest Service roads helping make the Mount Baker accessible for administration and utilization of forest resources, including recreation.

Mount Baker Recreation Area

The Mount Baker Recreation Area is one of the largest on the forest. Well-known Heather Meadows, which may be entered by State Highway 1 on the north side, offers a variety of recreation in beautiful alpine surroundings. In the winter the highway is open only to Mount Baker Lodge, but after midsummer it is open to its terminus 2 miles farther. Lodging and meals are available at the lodge during season, and there are improved camp and picnic grounds in the area.

The terrain above Mount Baker Lodge affords skiing for winter-sports enthusiasts, who are served by four rope tows. The lodge and the tows are privately operated under permit from the Forest Service. For those who like to hike, short trails lead to points of interest such as Table Mountain, Chain Lakes, Camp Kiser, Lake Ann, Bagley Lakes, and Panorama Dome. An excellent view of surrounding country can be enjoyed from the Dome.

It is interesting to note that Mount Baker, a cone that is geologically much younger than nearby Mount Shuksan and other surrounding granitic mountains, is of volcanic origin. On the southeast side of the mountain is an open, live crater from which issue vapor and sulfur fumes.

Other Forest Playgrounds

Southeast of Mount Baker is Baker Lake forest camp and a small cabin resort with boats for rent. This area is reached by county road from Concrete. Nearby Baker Hot Springs is accessible by trail but is undeveloped.

The Upper Skagit country is reached by road to Newhalem, Seattle City Railway to Diablo Lake, and City boat across Diablo to Ross Lake. There is also a foot trail around Diablo Lake. Above Ross Lake is a small resort service that rents sleeping rooms and boats. Trails from the lake shore lead into true back country, the North Cascade Primitive Area.

The Suiattle watershed has good forest camps—Buck Creek, Downey Creek, and Sulphur Creek—along the Suiattle Forest Service road on the north side of the river. There is a trail from the east end of this road to Image Lake and the Glacier Peak area.

East from Darrington, the Sauk Valley has a variety of inspiring scenery and historic interests. A side road and trail lead to Kennedy Hot Spring; another side road goes to Sloan Creek forest camp from which trails lead into high country at White Pass, Curry Gap, and other points.

The main Sauk River road connects with a forest highway at Barlow Pass and completes the Mountain Loop route. To the north, Darrington has facilities for meals, cabins, gasoline and groceries. Entering the Mountain Loop from the south, Granite Falls is the gateway town. Canyon Creek Lodge, 5 miles up the road, provides meals and cabins and in addition has dude ranch services.

At Robe and Verlot, travelers will find meals, cabins, and gasoline, as well as a public forest camp. Verlot is situated at the foot of

Pilchuck Mountain which may well become a popular State recreation area when the Forest Service road to Cedar Flats is completed. Pilchuck Mountain is only 5,334 feet high, but because it stands out separate and alone, is an unmatched panoramic viewpoint as well as a typically rugged alpine mountain. Farther up the South Fork of the Stillaguamish Valley are Gold Basin Recreation Area and a few small forest camps.

Monte Cristo Ghost Town

Beyond Silverton, the present auto road follows the old railroad location to Barlow Pass and up the Sauk River headwaters to Monte Cristo. Here was the center of an early mining boom—a boom that stimulated the construction of a 50-mile wagon road, a 40-mile railroad, and a smelter in the early 1890's. Although these original efforts of man are practically gone, traces of streets, hotels, schoolhouse, ore concentrators, and other man-made improvements are visible to those who search under the thrifty second-growth timber covering the area. Only the railroad turntable and an ore bunker skeleton high up on Wilmon Peaks remain intact. Mining ceased to be the main attraction long ago but a resort development is operating now to serve sightseers with food and rooms or cabins.

Youth Activity

Silverton School Camp is making outdoor recreation and training available to school children of Snohomish County. Located on an area under permit to the county, its development and program is directed by the county superintendent of schools. Camps such as this afford an excellent means for encouraging an appreciation of nature and developing responsible citizenship in America's youth. Silverton, a town with an interesting history, was a flourishing community years ago when it was on a railroad that ran to Monte Cristo.

Fire Prevention

The majority of forest fires can be traced to human carelessness. Many forest visitors do not realize how easily fires may be started during summer months, how destructive they may become, and how difficult and costly they are to control. For this reason, forest users are requested to follow a few simple but important rules for fire prevention:

1. When camping during the period July 1 to September 30, obtain a campfire permit unless you are at a campground where none is required.
2. Carry a shovel, ax, and water bucket with each auto or packhorse train when planning to camp.
3. Do not smoke while traveling—whether by auto, foot, or on horseback—except while on a paved or surfaced highway.
4. Crush out all cigars, cigarettes, and pipe heels on a rock or in mineral soil. Break matches in two before throwing them away.
5. Before building a campfire, clean an area down to mineral soil at least 10 feet in diameter and build the fire in the center. Keep it small. Be extra careful when strong winds or east winds occur.

6. Never leave your campfire unattended, even for a few minutes; first completely extinguish it with dirt and water.

7. Extinguish any uncontrolled fire you find burning, if possible, and then report it to the nearest forest officer. If you cannot put it out, go to the nearest phone; the operator or anyone else you get by ringing the phone will be glad to forward your message to the nearest forest station.

8. Read and observe directions on fire posters.

What To Do If Lost

1. Stop and sit down. Keep calm.

2. Clear an area and build a fire. After the fire is going well, cut and put green boughs on it so that there will be plenty of smoke. **BE SURE THE FIRE DOES NOT GET AWAY FROM YOU.**

3. Signal by three blasts from a whistle, three shots from a gun, three regulated puffs of smoke, three flashes of a mirror or flashlight. Repeat at regular intervals. If it is recognized by the search party it will be answered by two signals.

Three signals of any kind either audible or visible is the nationwide SOS call in the mountains. Use it only when in actual need of help.

4. Stay where you are.

Take Care Of Your Forest Land

1. Leave a clean camp. Burn as much of your garbage, especially fish heads and cleanings, as you can. Place the rest in garbage cans or pits. If no cans or pits are provided where you camp, bury all garbage and refuse. Don't scatter straw around.

2. Keep water supplies unpolluted. In addition to properly disposing of refuse, wash clothing away from springs, streams, and lakes.

3. Cooperate in preserving forest signs. They are posted for your information.

4. Observe State fish and game laws.

5. Cooperate with forest officers.

Administration

Headquarters of the forest supervisor and his staff is located in Bellingham, Wash. For practical administration, the forest is divided into six units, each under the yearlong direction of a district ranger. During the busy summer months many local persons are employed for forest protection, trail maintenance, road maintenance, logging slash disposal, reforestation, and other seasonal work that is essential to good forest management. Ranger stations are located at Glacier, Concrete, Marblemount, Verlot, and Darrington (2).

Visitors are always welcome in the Mount Baker National Forest. Forest officers will be glad to answer questions and help in any other way possible to make your stay pleasant.

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F-437613

The mountains of Monte Cristo remain unchanged. In the center are Wilmon Peaks where, in 1889, a prospector found a ledge of ore and exclaimed that it "has enough gold in it to make the Count of Monte Cristo look like a pauper." The boomtown that resulted no longer exists; only the bleached remains of buildings, the silent and weathered mine dumps, and the mountains survive.



F-464299

Part of the ski terrain at Heather Meadows, near the Mount Baker Lodge area, and the Austin Pass rope tow. Panorama Dome, high point on the horizon, is a mecca for skiers in winter and for sightseers the year round.



F-470723

A part of Austin Pass picnic area with Table Mountain in the background. Numerous forest camps, improved with simple facilities, are provided for public recreational use on the national forests.



F-470126

Trail Riders of the Wilderness along the Cascade Crest Trail on Miners Ridge. Behind them is Glacier Peak. The high-country trails of the Mount Baker Forest afford many excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation.



F-356333

Table Mountain reflected in Terminal Lake at Austin Pass Guard Station. This is one of many attractions in the Heather Meadows part of the Mount Baker Recreation Area.



F-437610

One of the few remaining big tree specimens in the Pudget Sound area, this Douglas-fir at Sloan Creek forest camp is at least 600 years old. Similar large trees can be seen along highways near Baker Lake and Shuksan.



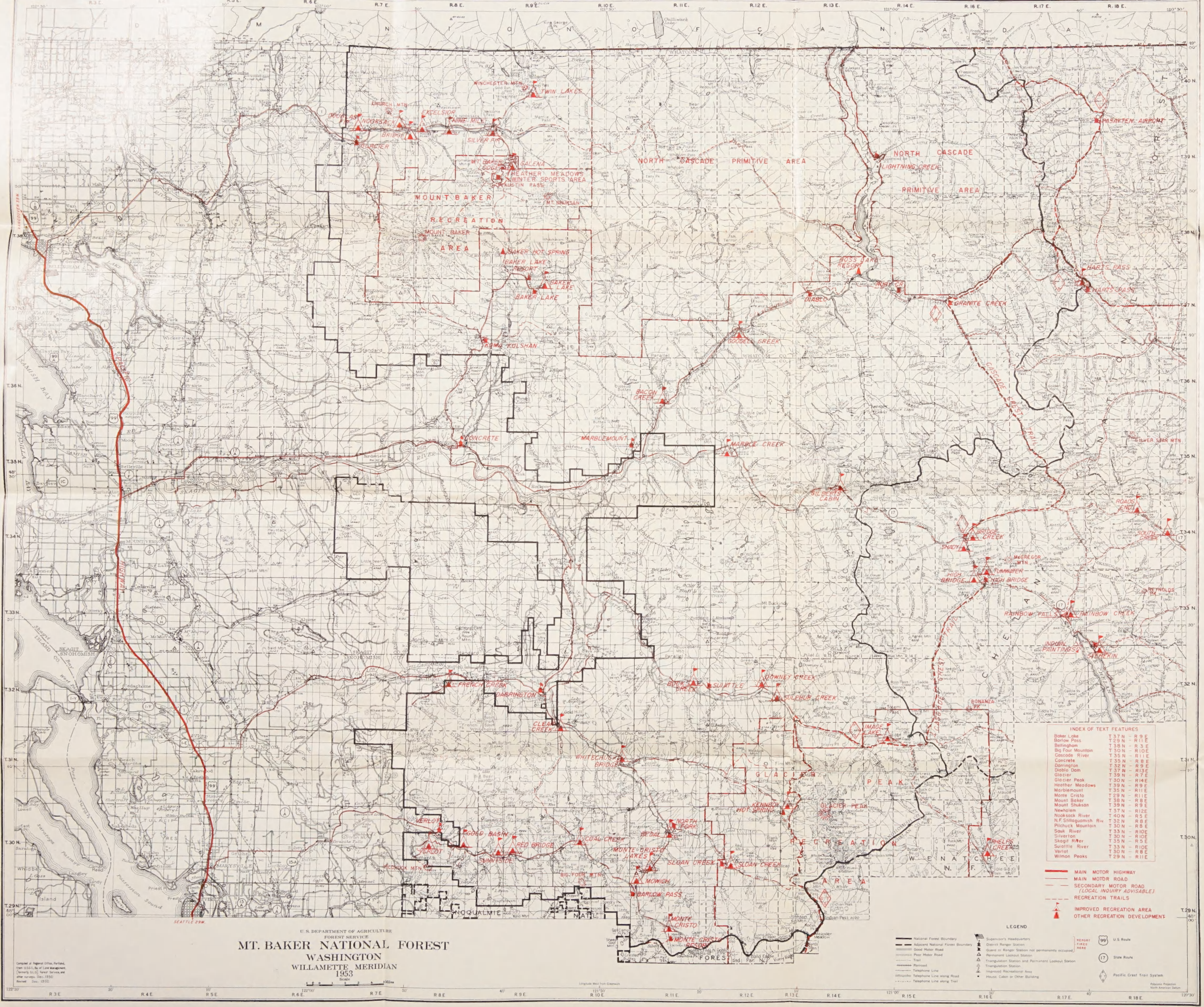
F-470716

Electric power is harnessed here at Seattle's Diablo Dam. Developments also include powerhouse, railroad, townsite, and power transmission line. Forest- and brush-covered mountain slopes help regulate runoff and tend to stabilize streamflow.



F-364709

A fine four-point in velvet! The deer is the principal wildlife crop produced on this national forest. In summer its food supply is bountiful, but the population must be kept in line with limited amounts of forage available in the winter.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
MT. BAKER NATIONAL FOREST
WASHINGTON
WILLAMETTE MERIDIAN
1953

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Compiled at Regional Office, Portland, from 1:50,000 Air of Land Management, (formerly 1:50,000) Forest Service, and other sources, Dec. 1950. Revised Dec. 1952.



F-470125

Glacier Peak, almost as high as Mount Baker, is less known because it is not conspicuous from the populous lowland areas. Here, it is reflected in the quiet waters of Image Lake in the upper Suiattle watershed.



F-348485

The mountain goat—a picturesque inhabitant of higher elevations on the Mount Baker National Forest. It rarely descends to where it can be photographed. Both Billys and Nannys have horns in the form of curved spikes 7 to 9 inches long.



F-470717

Logs from the Mount Baker National Forest are raw material for local, privately owned mills. Note the thrifty young timber around this mill pond in Snohomish County; wisely managed, it too will soon help sustain local wood-using industries.



F-470715

Practically all timber harvesting on the Mount Baker Forest is carried on in the mature old-growth stands. Clear cutting in patches, used wherever possible in the Douglas-fir region, is desirable because it leaves the area surrounded by seed trees, presents less fire hazard than large, continuous areas of logging debris, and permits ready salvage of killed timber in remaining forested areas. Snow-clad peak on the horizon is Mount Baker.